



GRIZZLY GOUGE

OFFICIAL REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM 5 NEWSLETTER

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The SITREP

The last month was a hot one for the Marines and Sailors of Regimental Combat Team 5, as they spent the majority of June completing Enhanced Mojave Viper training aboard Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, Calif.

During their time in the southern California desert, RCT-5 Marines and Sailors focused on completing predeployment training and fine tuning the unit's command and control capabilities.

After successfully completing EMV, RCT-5 is better prepared to continue the work of RCT-1 in reducing the capability and will of the insurgency by supporting the growth of Afghan National Security Forces. This growth, coupled with improvements in governance and socio-economic development, will be a key to providing the Afghan people with a secure environment of sustainable stability.

Training at EMV included various live fire evolutions incorporating a range of weapon systems, combat logistics patrols, combat lifesaving, fire support coordination, and cultural instruction to name a few.

All RCT-5 Marines and Sailors completed the table three course of fire on one of the many ranges within the 932 square mile training. This basic marksmanship exercise includes two stations, firing while maneuvering and unknown distance, conducted during the day and at night.

The firing while maneuvering station saw Marines and Sailors engaging targets at ranges of five to 25 yards. Shooters executed several

techniques to include controlled pairs, hammers pairs, and failure-to-stop drills (two shots in the chest, one in the head). These techniques were practiced at five, 10, 15, and 25 yards from static positions, while moving forward, and after executing left and right pivots.

The unknown distance station gave shooters an opportunity to further refine their marksmanship skills, utilizing targets ranging from 100 to 600 yards. Shooters sight in and engage targets that pop up at the various distances from the standing, kneeling and prone positions.

Another exercise in which all RCT-5 Marines and Sailors participated in was the M50 gas mask and mission oriented protective posture suit training. During the event, participants donned their M50 gas masks and MOPP suits before stepping into a chamber filled with CS gas. This tear gas is typically used as a riot control agent and will leave the same sensation as a significant sun burn when it comes in contact with unprotected skin. Marines and Sailors practiced clearing their masks and moving around in their MOPP suits to become more comfortable operating in a potentially contaminated environment.

Two units within RCT-5 that conducted the highest number of training events were Task Force Power and the Personal Security Detachment. TFP is composed of generator mechanics, electricians and motor transport Marines who are tasked with maintaining sustainability equipment at the various forward operating bases, combat outposts and patrol bases in RCT-5's area of operation.



Photo by Lance Cpl. Daniel Kujanpaa
MARINE CORPS AIR GROUND COMBAT CENTER TWENTYNINE PALMS, Calif. - U.S. Marine Cpl. Andrew Hoverson with the Regimental Combat Team 5 Personal Security Detachment clears a room while conducting a grenade range during Enhanced Mojave Viper here June 1. As the first regimental combat team to participate in EMV, RCT-5 will fine tune its command and control capabilities during this combined arms exercise.

The mission of the PSD is to provide security and protection for the RCT-5 commander, Col. Roger Turner, and other key leaders as required within RCT-5's AO.

These two units conducted several live fire ranges utilizing grenades and turret mounted medium and heavy machine guns. The PSD and TFP also completed periods of instruction and practical applications on combat lifesaving, casualty evacuation, counter improvised explosive device techniques, and motorized operations. The motorized operations course tested the training of the two units, putting them through simulated IED

See SITREP on Page 4

Harvest Moon reflects fading Southern Helmand insurgency

Story by Sgt. Jesse Stence

CAMP DYWER, Helmand province, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan - Spring will no longer be a favorite time of year for Southern Helmand insurgents because of counterinsurgency operations like the recent narcotics interdiction conducted by Afghan National Security Forces, with the support of Marines, soldiers and sailors of Regimental Combat Team 1, Task Force Leatherneck.

Operation Harvest Moon recently concluded, after six weeks of operations that extended coalition presence and attacked the heart of the region's drug trade, an important source of revenue for insurgents.

"We had reports that the enemy offensive was supposed to start in early May, and this operation was designed as a spoiling attack to prevent the enemy from being able to conduct those events," said Lt. Col. Lance Jackola, the RCT-1 future operations officer. "(Because of coalition opera-

tions) there has not been a significant increase of enemy activity in the area the past six months, and a lot of it, I think, (affected) the enemy's logistics and command and control nodes."

The operation involved coordinated searches and raids along suspected enemy supply routes. The Afghan National Security Force, supported by four RCT-1 battalions, established new vehicle checkpoints; conducted raids on known enemy facilities; and helicopter-borne search teams extended coalition presence to less densely populated pockets of the province.

"The idea behind the aerial interdiction force is to identify "rat lines" that lead into and out of our area of operations, and (to) interdict the enemy in areas where they are most vulnerable," explained Jackola, a native of San Marcos, Calif.

He said ANSF troops also played a significant role in the operation.

"All of the battalions that participated in this were partnered with Afghan

Army and police," Jackola remarked. "Everything we do is partnered with the Afghans, and every operation we do with them gets them closer and closer to assuming the goal of lead security in their districts."

According to RCT-1 officials, the operation yielded more than 1,500 pounds of narcotics, 60 weapons caches and approximately 50 detainees.

Capt. Glen Taylor, the assistant future operations officer with RCT-1, said the quantity of narcotics confiscated makes up only a small percentage of the total illicit trade in Southern Helmand. However, the operation extends the Afghan government's influence in the region and has certainly frustrated insurgents' efforts to destabilize the area.

Taylor, a Millboro, Va., native, predicted the area's drug trade will suffer in the long run due to the government's expanding influence.

"The operation will have an effect next planting season, when (farmers are) deciding what to plant," he said. "Poppy is going to be more profitable than the other crops (local farmers) can plant in the winter ... If we can't make the other crops more profitable, we can make it more painful for them to plant poppy."

Editor's Note: The regiment supports 2nd Marine Division (Forward), which serves as the ground combat element in Helmand. The mission of the division is to partner with ANSF to conduct counterinsurgency operations to secure the Afghan people, defeat insurgent forces, and enable ANSF to assume security responsibilities in the region. Ultimately, the partnered forces promote the expansion of stability, development and legitimate governance.



Photo by Lance Cpl. Christopher M. Carroll

MARJAH DISTRICT, Helmand province, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan -- Marines with 3rd Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment and Afghan National Army soldiers conduct a census patrol here, May 20, 2011. The Marines with 3/9 conducted census and security patrols after the battalion expanded its area of operations during Operation Harvest Moon.

RCT-5 Marines conduct cultural immersion training

Story by 2nd Lt. Chris Harper

MARINE CORPS AIR GROUND COMBAT CENTER TWENTYNINE PALMS, Calif. - Nearly 150 Marines with the Brigade and Police Advisory Teams and command elements of Regimental Combat Team 5, 1st Battalion 6th Marine Regiment and Combat Logistics Battalion 6 participated in a cultural immersion event here June 7.

Sharing a meal with role players acting as their Afghan counterparts, the Marines were given a taste of the culture they will encounter during their upcoming deployment to Helmand Province, Afghanistan.

The mailmastia, a Pashto word meaning invitation or hospitality, began with a few words from the role player acting as an Afghan National Army major general. Following the brief address, he invited Col. Roger Turner, commanding officer of RCT-5, to say a few words.

"Good evening brave Afghans. We are very proud to be here... We will fight with you like brothers, shoulder to shoulder to defeat our



Photo by Lance Cpl. Ammon Carter

MARINE CORPS AIR GROUND COMBAT CENTER TWENTYNINE PALMS, Calif. -U.S. Marines with Regimental Combat Team 5 have a meal with Afghan National Army role players at a key leader training engagement exercise during Enhanced Mojave Viper here June 7. As the first regimental combat team to participate in EMV, RCT-5 will fine tune its command and control capabilities during this combined arms exercise.

common enemy," said Turner.

Following looks of approval from the Afghan role players, Turner placed his hand over his heart in a gesture of sincerity as he concluded his remarks.

"We look forward to working together to

improve the future for all the people of Afghanistan," said Turner.

This cultural immersion event was conducted in coordination with Enhanced Mojave Viper under the supervision of the Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command Advisor Training Group. ATG prepares Marine Corps advisor teams to advise, mentor and train foreign military, police and border units in operational techniques and procedures to combat terrorism and counter an insurgency.

The course of instruction conducted by ATG spans the first 21 days of EMV training. During that time, Marines are given classes on the culture, customs and language of the Afghan people along with various opportunities to interact with Afghan role players. At the end of the 21-day training cycle, Marines reintegrate with their parent units to put their newly acquired cultural and linguistic skills to the test.

ATG strives to give Marines the most accurate experience possible. All of its role players are native Afghans who have since immigrated to the United States. Each role player is required to be fluent in Pashto or Dari, the two



Photo by Lance Cpl. Ammon Carter

MARINE CORPS AIR GROUND COMBAT CENTER TWENTYNINE PALMS, Calif. - U.S. Marine Cpl. Andrew Hoverson with the Regimental Combat Team 5 Personal Security Detachment clears a room while conducting a grenade range during Enhanced Mojave Viper here June 1. As the first regimental combat team to participate in EMV, RCT-5 will fine tune its command and control capabilities during this combined arms exercise.

See IMMERSION on Page 4

IMMERSION from Page 3

predominant languages spoken in Afghanistan.

Lt. Col. Daniel Benz, deputy director of ATG, views events like this as an opportunity for Marines to immerse themselves in the culture and language of the Afghan people.

"Marines are going to experience culture shock, that's inevitable," said Benz. "We want to get them as acclimated as possible to the cultural climate they're heading into."

Instructors at ATG emphasize that this is a learning environment, and one in which they expect Marines to make mistakes.

"Our role players will respond as Afghans actually would," said Benz. "We want our Marines to make mistakes here, so we can correct them before they meet their real counterparts in Afghanistan."

Dauod M. Parwani, cultural advisor for RCT-5, was pleased with the performance of both the role players and RCT-5 Marines throughout the immersion exercise. He believes the accurate, authentic portrayal by the role players left the Marines better prepared to build relationships with the Afghan people during their time in Helmand province.

"Much of the mystery about that first meeting is gone," said Parwani, a native of Lashkar Gah in Helmand province. "The Marines will be better able to interact with the people of Afghanistan."

Parwani's experience advising the U.S. military began before joining RCT-5. He previously worked as a linguist and cultural advisor for both the Marine Corps Center for Advanced Operational Cultural Learning and Navy Seal Team 7 during a 2009 deployment to eastern Afghanistan.

Cultural immersion events like this mailmastia are critical to the counterinsurgency fight being waged by Afghan National Security Forces and coalition forces. Building relationships with the people of Afghanistan is essential to the continued success of the joint effort.

"We're only going to achieve lasting success by building the capacity of ANSF and GIRoA [Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan]," said Benz. "Developing enduring relationships with the Afghan people is how we are going to get there." Center for Advanced Operational Cultural Learning and Navy Seal Team 7 during a 2009 deployment to eastern Afghanistan.

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SITREP from Page 1

attacks, ambushes and CASEVAC drills.

Throughout the duration of EMV training, the RCT-5 command participated in several cultural immersion events designed to better prepare Marines and Sailors for interaction and relationship building with the Afghan people. These cultural immersion events are a critical tool in the counterinsurgency fight being waged by Afghan National Security Forces and coalition forces. Building relationships with the people of Afghanistan is essential to the continued success of

the joint effort.

Since completing EMV, and becoming the first regimental combat team to do so, RCT-5 Marines and Sailors have continued preparations for deployment back at Camp San Mateo. The advanced party has already departed on block leave and the main body will begin its leave period in the coming weeks.

Look for the next issue of the Grizzly Gouge during the first week of August. The Gouge will continue to keep you informed on RCT-5 Marines and Sailors as they prepare to deploy in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

A letter from the Dana Point 5th Marine Regiment Support Group

Dear 5th Marines Family:

The Dana Point 5th Marine Regiment Support Group is here for YOU! Many of you already know of our existence, but for those of you who don't, the City of Dana Point adopted the 5th Marine Regiment in 2004. We are fortunate to have you as our Adoptive Unit, but with this honor and distinction goes an enormous amount of responsibility and commitment. Our mission is simple, to provide Support and Outreach to the 5th Marines & Sailors when deployed, and to take care of your families living in the Camp Pendleton area.

Please contact your FRO, Kim Merkel at (telephone number), or our support organization, supportrmrines@cox.net, for additional information. In the meantime, please check our website, www.danapoint5thmarines.com, for upcoming events. The City of Dana Point has a full calendar of events that can be enjoyed by both our single Marines and our Marines with families. You are now part of our Dana Point family.

Semper Fi,
Terry Rifkin
Dana Point 5th Marine Regiment Support Group
Director of Support and Outreach



FRO-Zone

"If it's from the from the FRO, you know it's so."

The "You've got mail" evolution of the last decade moved mainstream communication and networking technologies into the electronic age. Today it's all about being digital and the way we communicate on a personal level is transformed by texting, RSS feeds, Social Networking Sites (SNS) and blogs - Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, Yelp, Blogspot, etc. If that's where our families are then that's where you can find Regimental Combat Team 5 and 5th Marines.

If you are one of our Facebook Fans at www.facebook.com/RegimentalCombatTeam5, you already are where you need to be for the most up-to-date articles and photos of what RCT-5 is doing. Likewise we have www.facebook.com/5thMarines for our Pendleton-based battalions and rear detachment. All updates will appear in your Facebook newsfeed when they are posted, and you have complete access to the photos, articles and events uploaded to our pages. The Public Affairs Officer, his team, myself and the Family Readiness Team keep the pages updated. We maintain a steady vigil for appropriate interaction with our Fans who post comments and questions.

Understandably some folks choose not to be Facebook members for a myriad of personal reasons. However if privacy and safety concerns are the only reasons keeping you back, I encourage you to do what one of our Marine dads recently did, and that is to educate yourself about secure and private Facebook participation. It is possible have a "stealthy" and private presence on Facebook and still access the info and connection to your deployed service member. There are a number of web articles, instructions and how-to's to accomplish that, and a quick "google" search can get you started, "Facebook privacy" or "secure Facebook settings." If you need further assistance, please contact me directly.

The social networking also brings with it legitimate concerns about military "Operational Security," or OP-



SEC. The lives and safety of our Marines and Sailors depend on our responsible communication with each other, especially on the web and social networking sites.

Good tips for being an "OPSEC-aware" Facebook user:

- Never post exact names or reference specific individuals, dates, times, locations, assigned units, missions or exercises. Always ask yourself, "Do I really need to post this?" and think about who is reading it.
- Details on locations and times of unit deployments.
- References to trends in unit morale
- Verify all Friend Requests
- Customize your account settings to be as secure as possible – there are over 120!
- Understand risks associated with "Geo-tagging" with your smartphone
- If anyone, especially a foreign national, persistently seeks information, notify your military member immediately.

Bookmark our unit website, www.i-mef.usmc.mil/DIV/5Mar, for more downloadable information from the Family Readiness tab. We look forward to seeing you on the World Wide Web!

Your FRO,

Kim Merkel

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Marine Speak: PPE & FROG

PPE - Personal Protective Equipment (flak vests, kevlar helmet, gloves, eye protection, ear plugs, etc.)

FROG - Fire Resistant Operational Gear

The Chaplain's Corner

"Stronger after Twenty-Four"

This next month, my wife and I will celebrate our 24th anniversary. We married just after I reported to my first command and, since then, have logged apart quite a few years between deployments, schools, and other assignments. Despite long, hard separations, we've found our relationship growing deeper and stronger. Over the years, three things have helped our relationship not just survive but flourish.

Making Your Time 'Prime Time'

Make the time you have together count! Remember the way you treated your partner when you first began dating? You were on your company manners, you sought ways to make your partner feel special, and you made him/her the focus of your attention. Courting need not stop at the marriage altar. Certainly we all need personal space from time to time. But if your relationship is to flourish, it takes time and attention like anything else. If you love each other, then do things that you would expect people in love to do. Make the time you spend together 'prime time'.

Communication, Communication, Communication

Communication is the key to any successful relationship. Every Marine knows a unit is lost without good communications. Somehow, though, many of us expect we can spend our lives with another person without good communication. St. Francis prayed that he might more 'seek to understand than to be understood.' Even healthy couples experience disagreements. But those who succeed seek first to hear each other before being heard. Good communications also require good transmission. When you have disagreements, communicate your own feelings rather than focusing on your spouse's character. Remember that while others can interpret the 'facts' differently, your feelings belong only to you. Feelings need not necessarily make sense. Clearly communicating the way you feel while not personally attacking your spouse is more apt to be openly received. Lastly, good communications require good information. Computer technicians are famous for pointing out 'garbage in – garbage out'. Honesty must be the absolute bedrock of any relationship. After all, if you can't be honest with the love of your life, who can you be honest with? Honesty holds a couple together. That's because honesty demands risk, risk requires vulnerability, and vulnerability opens us to intimacy and trust – the glue of any marriage. Besides, at my age, it's a whole lot easier telling the truth than having to keep track of my own tall tales!



"Even healthy couples experience disagreements."

Being Committed to the Commitment

Finally, marriage is hard work. It's hard, though, because it demands something that doesn't come naturally to us: putting someone else's well being above our own. Marriage is no more and no less than the bond of your word – a commitment – "for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health until death do you part." Successful marriages are unconditionally committed to that commitment. When two people are committed to looking out for the well being of the other, a dynamic grows that can't be duplicated in any other relationship. As the two are pressed together through pressures of life and the friction of daily living, something marvelous happens: the two become one! And just as two metals welded together, the result is something stronger than the sum of the parts.

Conclusion

It's often been said the toughest job in the military is being a military spouse. But by making your time 'prime time', by practicing good communications, and by being committed to the commitment, you will find yourselves cherishing your precious time together. Then, rather than growing apart throughout your spouse's career, you'll find yourselves growing closer together into a stronger and more lasting marriage.

Lt. Cmdr. Mark S. Winward is the RCT-5 Regimental Chaplain. He is available anytime for pastoral counseling or personal support by either contacting him in his office at 760-725-7330 or by cell phone at 760-468-3318.